**DOCUMENT RESUME**

ED 161 142 EA 010 959

| | |
|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Johnson, Simon O.; Chaky, June |
| TITLE | Climate for Learning: A Symposium. Creating a Climate for Learning, and the Humanizing Process. The Principal and School Discipline. Curriculum Bulletin Vol. XXXII, No. 341. |
| INSTITUTION | American Nepal Education Foundation, Oceanside, Oreg. |
| PUB DATE | Sep 78 |
| NOTE | 24p. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | Curriculum Bulletin, Oceanside, Oregon 97134 ($2.00) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Discipline; Elementary Secondary Education; *Humanization; *Principals; Student Teacher Relationship; Teacher Administrator Relationship |

ABSTRACT

This publication contains two articles focusing on creating a climate for learning. In "Creating a Climate for Learning, and the Humanizing Process," Simon O. Johnson offers practical suggestions for creating a humanistic learning environment. The author begins by defining the basic concepts--humanism, affective education, affective situation, cognitive education, self-concept, and discipline. He then offers a number of practical suggestions on adopting humanistic principles, humanizing student goals and objectives, evaluating students, using humanistic teaching methods, and developing humanistic teacher characteristics. He also offers suggestions for improving the teacher-principal relationship. The author concludes with plans for making two specific humanistic school changes. In "The Principal and School Discipline," Johnson and June Chaky present and explain several suggestions emerging from their survey of over 700 teachers and administrators, including: (1) the principal should be a leader in staff development activities to give teachers the knowledge necessary to avoid classroom problems; (2) teacher evaluation should be a nonthreatening process that avoids the distrust out of which discipline problems spring; (3) the principal should ensure that fair rules and regulations are developed and enforced firmly; (4) the principal should make an effort to get to know pupils; and (5) discipline should be applied with tolerance and in the absence of confrontation. (Author/JM)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED161142

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Hugh B. Wood

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

# Curriculum Bulletin

## Climate for Learning: a Symposium

### Creating a Climate for Learning, and the Humanizing Process
### The Principal and School Discipline

No. 341
Vol. XXXII
September 1978
Price $2.00

Prepared by:

Simon O. Johnson
Associate Professor of Education
University of Florida
and
June Chaky
Instructor
Santa Fe Community College
Gainesville, Florida

Published by:

American Education Foundation
Division of the
American Nepal Education Foundation
Oceanside, OR 97134

Editor
Janet Witter

Associate Editor
Charles Gengler

Editor Emeritus
Hugh B. Wood

EA 010 959

## A Special Note to Our Subscribers

*After December 31, 1978, we will no longer stock Curriculum Bulletins No. 310 to 337, except on a "photo-copy," out-of-print basis (at 20¢ per page). However, until that date, we are offering the remaining "in-stock" bulletins at 50% discount, provided that the* net *order is for $5.00 minimum ($10.00 list price). You may include a 1978 or a 1979 (calendar year) subscription, or both,* at no discount, *to achieve the minimum order; in other words, with a payment of $7.50 for a subscription, you may order as few of the discounted bulletins as you wish. Please note that there are* no discounts *on any of the 1978 bulletins.*

*This is your last opportunity to fill in missing Curriculum Bulletins, or order additional copies of these bulletins at discounted prices. Please circulate this information among your staff, and send your order before our limited supply is exhausted. PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY ORDER.*

### Curriculum Bulletins Subject to 50% Discount Until December 31, 1978

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 310 | Remedial Reading: Case Studies (Elementary grades) | 22 p | $1.50 |
| 311 | Teaching Performance: Some Bases for Change | 18 p | 1.50 |
| 312 | An Inventory of Reading Skills | 20 p | 1.50 |
| 313 | Evaluative Reform in the Arts and Humanities (suggestions for) | 16 p | 1.50 |
| 314 | A Curriculum Manifesto (Jack Frymier) | 48 p | 1.50 |
| 315 | Responding to Student Unrest: Administrative Guide | 132 p | 2.50 |
| 316 | Ann. Bibliog., Sec. Sch. Remediation of Reading | 39 p | 2.00 |
| 318 | Writing is the Funnest Thing: Creative Writing | 43 p | 1.50 |
| 319 | The Open School: Roosevelt Junior High School, Eugene | 43 p | 1.50 |
| 320 | Designing Behavioral Goals | 31 p | 1.50 |
| 321 | Mapology: A Guide for Teaching Maps | 44 p | 2.00 |
| 322 | Guide to Art Prints in the Classroom | 42 p | 2.00 |
| 324 | B. F. Skinner and Carl Rogers on Behavior & Education | 48 p | 2.00 |
| 326 | The Heritage of America's Youth: A Source Book for Teachers | 128 p | 3.75 |
| 328 | Centers for Teachers (Making them effective) | 17 p | 1.50 |
| 329 | Games and Strategies for Teaching Reading | 32 p | 2.00 |
| 330 | Aids for Integrating Career Education (practical guide; many examples) | 51 p | 2.50 |
| 331 | A Review of the Literature on the Open-Concept Elementary School | 20 p | 1.50 |
| 332 | Circus (teaching unit | 24 p | 1.50 |
| 333 | Great Issues in American History (collection of quotations) | 144 p | 4.75 |
| 335 | Multicultural Education (Melting Pot: Sex Roles) | 24 p | 1.50 |
| 336 | Language Arts in The Elementary School | 32 p | 2.00 |
| 337 | Bias In The Textbooks | 36 p | 2.00 |
| *SPECIAL:* | One each of ***all*** the above Curriculum Bulletins in print (at time of order) (We reserve the right to substitute when our supply is exhausted.) | | 15.00 |

**1978 Curriculum Bulletins *(no discount)***

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 338 | Child Abuse and Neglect: a Major Childhood Disease (Dr. Lendon H. Smith) | 23 p | 2.00 |
| 339 | Widening Cultural Horizons: Intercultural Education (William Van Til) | 16 p | 1.50 |
| 340 | Reform In Secondary Education, and a Proposal (Galen Saylor) | 25 p | 2.00 |
| 341 | Climate for Learning: Role of Principal and School Discipline (Simon Johnson) | 21 p | 2.00 |
| 342 | To be announced | | |

**SUBSCRIPTION:** 1978 or 1979 Calendar year *(no discount)*, USA $7.50; Canada $9.00

---

**ORDER FORM—*Close-out Special***

CURRICULUM BULLETIN
OCEANSIDE, OR 97134

Please send the following: I enclose $_____ in payment.

Name and number of bulletin, package, or subscription:_____

_____

Mail to: Name_____

Address_____ Zip_____

**PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY ORDER**

# Climate for Learning: a Symposium

Simon O. Johnson and June Chaky

Table of Contents


| | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| I. | Creating a Climate for Learning, and the Humanizing Process | 2 |
| | Introduction | 2 |
| | Proposition 1—Concepts Must Be Understood | 3 |
| | Proposition 2—Recognition of a Need for Change Precedes Change | 4 |
| | Proposition 3—Open Communication Is a Necessity | 6 |
| | Proposition 4—Participants Should Evaluate Their Own Behavior | 8 |
| | Proposition 5—The Approach Must Be Practical | 9 |
| | Illustrative Plans | 10 |
| II. | The Principal and School Discipline | 12 |
| | Introduction | 12 |
| | The Principal as Leader in Staff Development | 12 |
| | Teacher Evaluation as a Learning Process | 13 |
| | Fair Rules and Regulations Firmly Enforced | 14 |
| | Getting To Know the Pupils | 16 |
| | Applying Discipline with Tolerance, Not Confrontation | 17 |
| | Conclusion | 20 |


*The principal and the teacher, each performing his role and working cooperatively, can create a climate for learning and eliminate many discipline problems if they utilize the humanizing process. "Creating a Climate for Learning, and the Humanizing Process" addresses itself to proven and practical means of establishing positive learning climates which help students attain cognitive skills. "The Principal and School Discipline" presents effective measures which the principal may use to aid in preventing disruptive classroom behavior.*

# Creating A Climate For Learning, and the Humanizing Process

Simon O. Johnson

## Introduction

"Johnny, I don't ever want to see that behavior in this classroom again!" How many times have we, as teachers or administrators, made this statement? But to what avail? It perhaps did not change Johnny's behavior. The yelling might have caused the teacher to become frustrated and to lose much valuable energy. Perhaps the critical question should be, what can be done in order to improve the learning climate in the classroom?

Specifically, the purpose of this manuscript is to present to the reader a list of practical suggestions that one might use for creating a humanistic learning environment, one that fosters maximum learning opportunities for students and reduces the disruptive situations for teachers.

The data for this study were obtained from more than 1,500 teachers and principals who participated in numerous workshops in more than six different states. The data collecting period began in 1973 and continues to the present time. The participants were from urban and rural areas and worked in elementary, junior high and high schools.

For this paper, humanism is defined as a concept or viewpoint suggesting a human centered educational program: one which respects personality, encourages self-realization, develops desirable attitudes, and builds a positive self-concept in the individual. Smith[1] writes that the definition of humanism may shift from period to period and that the concept took shape as a definite intellectual movement in fourteenth century Italy. Humanism was based on the premise that the fullest development of the individual is an end in itself, apart from the reward of an afterlife; that the intelligent satisfaction of the body is almost as important as the development of the mind.

According to Combs,[2] the earliest conception of a "good" teacher was that of a scholar. It was assumed that any person could teach others effectively provided he possessed appropriate knowledge. Today, most educators know that the above concept is not true. There are many factors that will contribute to one's becoming a "good" teacher. One factor that is crucial in the development of a wholesome learning climate is the attitude of the principal. If the principal chooses not to establish a humane environment for the school, the consequences could be detrimental to the total growth of students. Shane[3] seems to summarize this by stating, "Whether or not we can improve the human prospect hinges on the way we examine our system of beliefs, the values it supports, and the alternatives that our values open or close to us."

The development of humanistic teaching characteristics and the organization of the learning climate that provides maximum opportunities for learning is a process that one must work to accomplish. Most educators will agree that it is difficult to identify a set of competencies or characteristics that all teachers who are classified as "good" or "superior" will demonstrate when working with students. However, studies by Palmer,[4] Barr and Emans,[5] and Ryans[6] all indicated that teachers who were classified as "good" demonstrated a knowledge of the subject matter and humanistic techniques in their teaching styles.

Generally, this manuscript is designed to assist educators with workable solutions to inter-personal problems whether they be teacher-student, student-student, teacher-teacher, teacher-administrator, or student-administrator. When problems arise, major emphasis will be placed upon the awareness of the person, awareness of the problem and techniques and procedures to use for solving the problems. However, basically, emphasis will be placed upon the awareness of appropriate humanistic techniques that could be used to prevent as many classroom disruptions as possible and to assist in the creation of a wholesome learning climate.

Based upon the selected research, literature, and work with teachers, the following five propositions concerning the creation of a climate for learning have been formulated.

**Proposition 1**

***In order to create a positive learning climate, concepts basic to the school and to the classroom must be understood by staff and students.***

Terms such as humanism, affective education, and discipline are relative in nature. It is possible that teachers at the same school would define these terms in different ways. For the last three years, as I conducted workshops for teachers and administrators in the areas of humanism and classroom climate, I have asked the participants to list their definitions for a few key words that were frequently used. The following definitions were chosen from lists that were long and varied. It is hoped that these definitions will cause the readers to think about their own situations and to develop definitions or concepts that are generally common in nature.

**Humanism Is:**

1. to trust, support, care for, feel for and share with an individual
2. respect for self and others
3. interaction among principal, teacher, and student emphasizing an awareness, concern, understanding and respect for each other's needs, feelings and goals
4. to be conscious, concerned about and flexible to the needs of others
5. dealing honestly and personally with the feelings and values of others in order to promote growth and encourage self-development

**Affective Education Is:**

1. using affective situations as a teaching tool for cognitive (and other) learning, as well as the enhancement of self
2. the development of one's emotions and feelings which leads to the development of humanism
3. other-centered action that leads to the growth of children's attitudes and values
4. utilizing daily encounters to develop and meet educational goals through dealing with emotions
5. recognizing feelings and emotions of the child and dealing with these in a manner which will enhance the individual's self-concept

**Affective Situation Is:**

1. an emotional incident that can be a teachable moment
2. any event which involves feelings or emotions and calls for a response
3. events and happenings caused by feelings that are common and real
4. any and every situation dealing with people and their emotions and feelings
5. one in which self-concept is enhanced by sensitive awareness of other's emotional climate

**Cognitive Education Is:**

1. the part of an individual's learnings that deals specifically with the acquisition of intellectual skills and knowledge for meeting situational needs
2. knowledge learned through an evaluative approach to gaining concrete facts
3. content oriented
4. fundamental skills required for a child's educational progress
5. teaching necessary content

**Self-concept Is:**

1. the way a person perceives himself or what he believes himself to be
2. the way you see yourself (good and bad). Before you can have positive feelings about others, you must have positive feelings about self.
3. your own view of yourself—not how others see you
4. feelings of self worth—what an individual believes he is
5. how you feel about yourself and how you feel others feel about you. Seeing one's self as able, acceptable, wanted, respected, as a person of dignity and integrity

**Discipline Is:**

1. a process by which students must follow established rules and policies
2. helping students to develop self reliance and responsibility

3. teachers and principals lose control of the classroom or the school

4. the opposite of a lack of discipline

5. positive in nature

Many of the definitions listed herein could have been written by many educators. The important factor that I wish to emphasize is that one must be made more aware of broad concepts that could be derived from the terms listed. The exact wording of the definition/concept is not important at this point. The most important factor is that educators at individual schools develop a practical, workable concept for the terms and apply the concepts to everyday teaching, administration, or working conditions.

### Proposition 2

***Change efforts in classroom and school organization will be more effective when teachers and principals see a need for the change.***

The creation of a positive learning climate might indicate that some teachers and principals must make a few basic changes in their methods of working. One of the most difficult problems I encountered during my years as a principal was that of trying to influence a rigid teacher to be more flexible. This teacher felt that becoming more flexible would be perceived as a sign of weakness by the students and create more discipline problems for her. The real reason for this teacher's unwillingness to change could have been that she was insecure in her role as a teacher. Oliver[7] states that "More often, insecurity comes from doubts about ability to do things in a different way."

In an attempt to assist teachers and administrators to develop a more humane climate when working with others, the participants made suggestions in several areas that seem to be of importance. The reader must understand that there are many techniques and procedures that could be used to improve the relationship between people. The ones listed below are used primarily to motivate thinking on the part of the reader.

#### Principles

Each person should adopt a set of principles or rules that should be followed when working with people. Examples of rules or principles that could be used by teachers or principals are as follows:

1. Sarcasm should never be used.

2. Don't constantly nag or yell.

3. Make sure assignments are clearly stated (orally or in writing).

4. Don't punish the entire group for a misdemeanor caused by a few.

5. Be prepared when working with individuals, small groups or the total group.

6. Develop a general sense of humor.

7. Enforce rules that have been made or have them removed.

8. Provide a place for people (students and teachers) to air their gripes. Listen and do not always defend yourself.

9. When possible, avoid singling out individuals.

10. Learn the technique of asking more open ended questions.

11. When you disagree with a person, don't pound the desk or table.

12. Shouting usually serves to frustrate you more.

13. Refer to students (and teachers, when appropriate) by first name or preferred nickname.

14. Become aware of the habits of the people you work with.

15. Be extra careful to pay attention to the shy person.

16. Be firm yet fair when enforcing rules.

17. Praise people when they earn it.

18. Involve the group in planning some activities.

19. Talk with appropriate persons about school concerns when it is necessary to do so.

20. Do not feel that you have all the answers.

#### Objectives

During the late 'sixties and early 'seventies much emphasis was placed upon the obtainment of behavioral objectives. The public demanded that schools show evidence that the students had reached certain cognitive objectives. One weakness of this concept (as I see it) is that teachers need to work toward affective goals before some students will allow themselves to develop cognitive skills. Presently, educators like Combs and others are working toward the development of objective ways to measure affective objectives. Until an acceptable way to measure affective objectives is found, teachers need to do the best they can in order to make

students' goals and objectives more human. Listed below are several suggestions the participants in my survey indicated they used in an attempt to humanize the students' goals and objectives.

1. Identify as many different needs of students as possible.
2. Identify the needs that the teacher can assist the students with.
3. Seek help from the principal, counselor, psychologists or other resources.
4. Organize teachers' time in the most efficient/effective manner in order to personalize instruction for students.
5. Don't try to do everything for everyone.
6. Use varied techniques for helping students.
7. Teach students how to make decisions or choices.
8. Develop objectives based upon the students' interests as well as their needs.
9. Develop objectives that will require students to work with each other.
10. Constantly review the evaluative instrument being used.
11. Objectives should be developed that will cause a focus on the present and the future as well as the past.
12. Give the students the opportunity to plan some of their objectives.
13. Objectives should be developed that will cause students to experience democratic living in the classroom.
14. Activities should be developed that will assist students in becoming more aware of their own values as compared to society.
15. Curriculum revision should be continuous.

**Evaluations**

The teacher who is attempting to create a better climate for learning can further improve the environment by reviewing the procedures used for evaluating students. If one major purpose for evaluating students is to improve instruction, teachers should evaluate themselves as well as the students continuously. Oliver[8] states, "Successful experiences in working and studying together also foster a good climate; thus, it is important to see that the involvement be widespread."

The participants in this study believed that teachers could humanize classroom evaluation procedures by applying principles similar to the ones listed below:

1. The goals and objectives for teaching should be clearly written and understood by the students.
2. Non-verbal and affective objectives should be evaluated as well as verbal and cognitive objectives.
3. When developing the evaluative instrument, student input should be utilized.
4. In addition to objective tests which give little chance for judgment or development of organizing ability, instruments which measure behaviors, skills, and attitudes should be given.
5. Evaluation must be continuous and cumulative.
6. The evaluative instrument should demonstrate the recognition of individual differences among students.
7. Effective evaluation procedures include the parents as well as the students and teacher.
8. Evaluation should be based upon the materials taught.
9. Periodically, students should assist in evaluating achievement as well as participating in goal-setting activities.
10. Paper work should be held to a minimum.
11. The use of a non-threatening approach should be used when discussing evaluation.
12. During the course of activities, emphasize learning rather than grades.
13. A variety of methods should be used to evaluate students.
14. Test scores and grades should be considered a private matter between the teachers and the student.
15. Consideration needs to be given to the possible relationship between the methods used for handling grades and the development of a positive self-concept.

**Methods of Teaching**

Improving the learning climate within the classroom requires that the teacher employ many methods of teaching. Listed below are several techniques

teachers indicated that they have successfully used in creating the proper learning climate:

1. more teacher-student planning
2. group-centered activities with the teacher serving as a facilitator
3. formal lectures
4. team teaching
5. making effective use of audio-visual materials
6. role playing
7. working with the counselor and media specialists
8. learning center
9. term reports or projects
10. field trips
11. peer helpers
12. volunteers
13. individual assignments
14. use of para-professionals
15. a combination of several of the above

**Teacher Characteristics**

There are many procedures one can use in order to ascertain a need for change. Many of the participants in this study indicated that there were certain characteristics that an organized educator would demonstrate. The participants emphasized that educators didn't demonstrate these characteristics in any order nor did each person demonstrate each one. The list of characteristics that follows is intended to serve as a guide for interested educators to use when reviewing their own educational procedures:

1. Classroom materials are organized in a manner that they can be found when needed.
2. The teacher is time-conscious.
3. The teacher doesn't panic easily.
4. The lessons are planned on short and long-range bases.
5. The students are more secure.
6. There are fewer discipline problems in the class.
7. The principal classifies the teacher as "good" or "superior."
8. Good students' records are kept by the teacher.
9. The teacher paces herself in order to have enough energy to finish the day.
10. Substitute teachers find it easy to work in this class.
11. There is an objective system for assessing pupil progress.
12. The teacher utilizes other resources.
13. Materials are prepared before class.
14. The teacher contacts parents concerning positive and negative aspects of the student's work at least once per year.
15. The management procedures are known by all.

**Proposition 3**

***In order for a wholesome learning climate to be developed teachers and administrators must establish ways to foster open communication.***

There are many procedures principals and teachers can use in order for them to communicate effectively. The participants in the survey and I agreed that in order for a wholesome learning climate to be developed, the administrative staff and the teachers must practice open and honest communication. When this type of communication is practiced between teachers and administrators, teachers will be more likely to practice it with their students.

One technique that was employed by teachers and principals to foster openness was that of listing commendations and criticisms of each other. One participant indicated that this procedure had worked very well at her school. Consequently, principals and teachers in the survey were asked to list things they commended and criticized each other for. Listed below is a partial finding from the survey.

**Teachers Commended Principals for:**

*1. volunteering positive comments on classroom activities, complimenting teams, individuals on major accomplishments
*2. offering suggestions to a teacher seeking help

* These statements appeared on the majority of reports.

*3. supporting teachers in conflict with students and parents

*4. Maintaining close contact with students, knowing them by name

*5. respecting teachers' opinions

6. helping teachers find a fair method of student discipline

7. keeping abreast of new teaching techniques and materials and welcoming new ideas

8. smiling and showing a sense of humor

9. allowing teachers a voice in choosing materials

10. being friendly to parents who visit school and presenting a good public image

11. satisfying reasonable requests for materials

12. making allowances for an occasional "bad day" and giving the teacher the benefit of the doubt

13. attending extracurricular activities, extending their work days

14. showing genuine interest in students

15. assisting teachers in finding materials, aids, and aides

**Teachers Criticized Principals for:**

*1. offering so little positive reinforcement, praise, recognition to individuals on achievements, and failing to show interest in teachers' methods, projects, etc.

*2. visiting classrooms only for the purpose of evaluating the teacher, not to see students' work, projects, etc. and to relate to students

*3. having no visible philosophy of education, providing no real leadership, vacillating and being easily swayed by pressure groups from faculty and community

*4. failing to attend workshops, professional meetings, read professional materials, inspire teachers with innovative ideas or to encourage their innovations

*5. failing to discipline teachers who are *not* doing their jobs

*6. using nebulous criteria to evaluate teachers, being unfamiliar with methodology and for being poor teachers themselves

*7. treating teachers as inferiors

8. interrupting classes with intercom announcements

9. being forgetful, failing to make notes, thus creating mixups and confusion

10. appearing to be firm on a decision and then reversing suddenly and arbitrarily

11. running from a real problem and leaving the teacher to solve it alone

12. talking to teachers about a colleague's shortcomings

13. failing to support teachers in public

14. letting a small clique of teachers influence decisions affecting all

15. listening excessively to student complaints

16. repeatedly choosing the same few teachers to serve on committees

17. making new rules and failing to enforce them or trying to make others enforce them

18. being overly friendly with students and losing their respect

19. failure to establish adequate opportunities for communication (faculty meetings, rep. groups, liaison groups) to keep morale high

20. failing to plan teacher inservice programs

21. being too concerned with their own public image and newspaper coverage

22. trying to protect the "school without failure" image by passing students failed by teachers

23. carrying on a personal conversation in front of other faculty members

24. calling meetings on very short notice

25. using school vehicle for own use, making it unavailable for others scheduled to use it

**Principals Commended Teachers for:**

1. volunteering for extra jobs enthusiastically

2. preparing lessons well

3. giving extra attention to children, being warm and loving

4. doing their jobs as professionals, working hard

5. sharing ideas, communicating with colleagues

* These statements appeared on the majority of reports.

6. being punctual, meeting deadlines
7. showing initiative
8. decorating classrooms attractively
9. cooperating with school policies
10. dressing attractively
11. being a good character model
12. continuing professional studies, attending workshops
13. encouraging slow learners
14. being fair
15. showing school spirit
16. realizing the principal is human
17. maintaining good classroom control

**Principals Criticized Teachers for:**

*1. leaving the faculty room a mess
*2. leaving children unsupervised
*3. speaking of children in a derogatory way
*4. thinking that their concerns are the only concerns facing the principal
5. categorizing children and then grading/punishing them accordingly
6. staying in the teaching field while not really liking children or teaching
7. breaking the same rules they force children to obey
8. rude behavior in faculty meetings
9. not being supportive of colleagues, principal, students, pettiness
10. being consistently late with reports
11. not reading memos carefully
12. forcing principal into position of "backing them up" after harsh or unwise discipline
13. running to principal with discipline problems before attempting to solve them
14. being defensive during teacher-administrator conferences
15. not considering parental feelings, sensitivity
16. dressing unprofessionally
17. not being candid when administration has requested candor
18. wasting teaching time by chatting with colleagues
19. *sitting* too much of the day
20. failing to smile

After the lists had been compiled the participants reviewed each item and identified those characteristics that were not conducive to creating a positive climate for learning. It appeared that each participant became more aware of the daily things that were serving as barriers to communication between teachers and principals. Most participants continued the discussion of the items checked by developing ways to implement similar procedures in their own schools.

## Proposition 4

***A more effective learning climate is developed when participants evaluate their own behavior.***

Self-evaluation is one of the most effective ways for a participant to assess his/her strengths and weaknesses. This statement is based upon the belief that the proper climate has been developed before one is asked to evaluate self. There are many techniques that can be used in order for an effective self-assessment to be made. Listed herein is one that participants in the survey felt was practical enough for one to properly assess his/her strengths and weaknesses. This instrument is not intended to be used to rate teachers or principals. It is intended to be used by a person who wishes to take a look at his/her own strengths and weaknesses.

When attempting to create a positive climate for learning one should emphasize the following areas:

**A Principal or Supervisor should ask himself/herself:**

1. What kind of leader am I?
   a. in organizing the management team
   b. in creating a positive attitude toward staff development
2. Is the school's philosophy clearly stated and made available to teachers, staff and other concerned citizens?
3. Would I want to work for me?
4. Do I involve most of the teachers in committees and other decision-making bodies?

5. Am I threatened by unions, professional organizations, PTO's, PTA's or other community organizations?

6. Have I created a positive climate for conferences so that most of them will end positively?

**A Teacher should ask himself/herself:**

1. Am I using the same basic techniques I used two years ago?

2. Have I talked with a fellow teacher within the past two months concerning an innovation, a problem or other school concerns?

3. If I were a student, would I want to be in my class?

4. Am I comfortable when working with most adults?

5. Have I talked with the principal within the past two months concerning a classroom innovation?

If the answer to any of the above questions is no, the evaluator should analyze the reasons for the answer and make a plan to improve himself/herself.

**The Principal and/or the Teacher should ask:**

1. Who are the students in the school who are causing a majority of the discipline problems?

2. Are the problems most frequently in the same classroom or the same area of the school?

3. How do I handle disruptive problems that occur in my area?

4. How many students have I sent to the office or home within the past two months? (List the reasons.)

5. Do I create a problem for my students?

6. Am I realistic in my expectations of the students?

7. Do I know as much about the background of my students as I should know?

8. Am I firm—yet fair—in my relationship with students?

9. Do I like working with students?

10. What have I done within the past two months to improve students' behavior?

Once this assessment is completed, the evaluator should outline procedures to be used in order to maintain strengths and to improve upon weaknesses. The findings on the instrument should be private in nature. That is, the evaluator need not share the results with anyone unless he/she chooses to share. Again, the reader needs to be reminded that the procedures listed herein represent only one way to assess needs. Educators should choose the method that is the most appropriate to them and proceed.

**Proposition 5**

***Changes will be more effective if the problems are practical and appropriate follow-up activities are developed.***

Participants must see a need to develop activities that would assist them in creating a better learning climate. The person who feels successful with the approaches or techniques used to accomplish a goal might not consider investigating other techniques or methods. Consequently, it might be necessary for someone to assist the educator in looking at other methods and in using parts of these methods if they are appropriate.

When working with teachers, principals and other educators in workshops, I have succeeded in causing them to think about developing a better learning climate by creating situations in which they must focus on individual problems. Each problem is discussed, a goal is written, and a plan of action is developed to reach the identifiable goal. In addition, follow-up activities are developed in order for me to check with the participants at a later date concerning the progress made toward the attainment of the goal. Usually the follow-up procedure is a letter from me to each participant inquiring about his progress toward accomplishing the goal, or letters from my university students to the participants seeking answers to specific classroom management problems.

The strength of this plan of inservice is the identification of specific goals, the development of activities and the follow-up procedures used. Over a four-year period I have corresponded with more than 500 participants. Presently, more than 60% of those contacted have written a follow-up reply. It is interesting to note that many of those who reply indicate that the plan developed in the workshop didn't work. However, they will usually indicate that they found another way to solve the problem. I am pleased when I get replies of this nature because I feel that the educator knew the goal to be accomplished and tried different methods to accomplish it. In addition, the techniques used to solve the identifiable problem could be transferable to other problem situations.

## Illustrative Plans

To assist the reader to fully understand the procedure used in order to influence teachers and others to consider changes, two plans developed by different participants have been included. The plans have been changed in order for the authors to remain anonymous and the content reduced in order for it to fit into this manuscript.

**Plan I**

*Goal:*

To convince the members of my team that we should utilize the services of classroom volunteers

*Barriers Against Accomplishing Goal:*

1. The team leaders' strong negative attitude against using volunteers
2. Teachers afraid parents will "gossip" against negative aspects of the class
3. The negative feelings some parents hold about some teachers

*Positive Aspects Towards Reaching Goal:*

1. Principal's support
2. My desire to utilize the skills of volunteers
3. Successful use of volunteers by other teams in the school

*Plan to Accomplish Goal:*

Date: September 6—December 11

1. Discuss the goal with the team leader.
2. Ask teachers from other teams to discuss positive and negative aspects of a volunteer program.
3. With the team members, survey the parents of children in the team and ascertain which parents would be interested.
4. For the first month, select three parents whom I can work with in order to make the program a success.
5. Determine a time when the parents can come into school and meet with me privately, then the children and the other team persons. Identify their strengths and weaknesses and set a time for them to work with me.
6. Keep records of the progress being made by volunteers and share it with my team members.
7. Invite one or two other team members to use a volunteer. Hopefully, in due time the team leader and other members of the team will use volunteers effectively.

**Plan II**

*Goal:*

To foster more cooperation between the media specialists and classroom teachers

*Barriers Against Accomplishing Goal:*

1. Philosophical difference between the media specialist and the teachers concerning how the media center should be used
2. The principal's negative attitude toward the media center
3. Teachers constantly comparing the new media specialist with the previous one

*Positive Aspects Toward Reaching Goal:*

1. The well equipped media center
2. Teachers' interest in expanding media services
3. Adequate time for students to use media center

*Plan To Accomplish Goal:*

Date: September—May

1. Have a conference with the media specialist and discuss my expectations and listen to her reasoning for organizing and conducting the center in the manner she did last year.
2. Involve media specialist more with planning grade group activities.
3. With the media specialist's assistance, create a more extensive class library.
4. Request that films that are shown to my class be more related to class activities.
5. Encourage other grade groups to involve the media specialist more when they are planning activities for the grade.*

---

* Additional information concerning these plans may be secured from the author.

Goals as written by participants will cover a wide range of educational problems. Goals such as improve classroom discipline, teacher-principal communication, assessing pupils' needs and teacher inservice are commonly listed. My communication with the participant is very specific. My questions are concerned with the procedures used to accomplish the stated goal. Itsis this personal follow-up about a common problem that seems to be of the most value in causing the participants to seek ways to improve the teaching learning process within the clasroom.

## Summary

Creating a positive learning climate is a process that most teachers and principals can implement in a classroom, or school-wide. The process described does not require a large sum of money for one to operationalize. It requires educators who are concerned about creating the best teaching/learning climate possible for students. It requires educators who are accountable to themselves as well as to students, administrators and other agents.

The process of change is not one to come about because someone says there is a need for a few changes. The teacher, principal, consultants, students or parents can talk change as often as they wish. However, before constructive changes can be considered, one needs to know the specific goal to be attempted and the techniques to be used in order to accomplish the goal.

The participants in my workshops listed several techniques or methods one might use when attempting to implement suggestions for change in a school or in a classroom. The suggestions listed below are intended to serve as a guide for those who are interested in achieving or initiating specific steps that might lead to a more humane wholesome learning climate.

1. Be yourself.
2. Seek ways to remove communication barriers among students, teachers and administrators.
3. When appropriate, give a helping hand to peers.
4. Acknowledge feelings of others.
5. Recruit, train and utilize the services of volunteers.
6. Foster openness between teachers and students.
7. Share ideas with fellow teachers.
8. Implement a self-assessment analysis.
9. Serve on school-wide committees.
10. Make an effort to learn more about your students and peers.

It is the author's intent to provide information to stimulate persons to attempt to provide a better learning environment for students. At this point, the reader should be thinking that the creating of a wholesome learning environment can be implemented by a motivated individual, "turned on" grade groups, entire faculties, or by the principal. In addition, it is hoped that each reader will recall his own situation and think of goals that are practical, reachable and of interest to him. With this thought in mind, the person should state his goal, determine factors for and against the attainment of the goal and should make a simple plan to follow in order to reach the goal. We must work as hard to create a positive learning climate as we work to help students attain cognitive skills

## Documentation


1. Smith, Arnett, *Development and Validation of an Instrument to Assess Humanistic Administrative Behaviors of School Principals.* Unpublished doctor's dissertation, University of Florida, Gainesville, 1977, p. 18.
2. Combs, Arthur W., *The Professional Education of Teachers*, Allyn and Bacon Inc., Boston, 1965, p. 1.
3. Shane, G. S., *Student Involvement: A Bridge to Total Education*, Revised Ed., Raleigh: North Carolina State Board of Education, 1975, p. 707.
4. Palmer, George H., *The Ideal Teacher*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1908, pp. 8-9.
5. Barr, Arvil S., and Emans, Lester M., "What Qualities and Prerequisites to Success in Teaching," *Nations Schools*, 6:60-64, September, 1930.
6. Ryans, David G., *Characteristics of Teachers*, A Research Study, American Council on Education, Washington, D.C., 1960, p. 10.
7. Oliver, Albert I., *Curriculum Improvement, A Guide to Problems, Principles and Process*, 2nd Ed., Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1977, p. 335.
8. *Ibid.*

# The Principal and School Discipline

Simon O. Johnson
and
June Chaky

## Introduction

It is the principal's responsibility to set the tone for a positive learning atmosphere in the school. The principal should serve as a role model for the staff, teachers, and pupils to emulate when concerned with preventing and eliminating disruptive problems. Usually some of the disruptive problems caused by pupils have direct relationship with the manner in which the principal organizes and operates the school.

The principal is responsible for preventing and eliminating as many discipline or disruptive problems as possible. Usually some problems can be eliminated by employing "excellent" teachers, purchasing adequate materials and supplies, maintaining an appropriate teacher-pupil ratio, and by properly organizing the management team. Other problems can be eliminated by a principal who knows the strengths and weaknesses of his staff, respects his teachers and is thereby respected by them, and is constantly seeking to make the school a more wholesome place for pupils.

The importance of the role of the principal in preventing or eliminating disruptive behavior in the school, and specifically in the classroom, should be recognized. In an attempt to find out how principals could be more effective in this role, the authors surveyed more than 700 teachers and administrators. We asked, "What can the principal do to assist you in preventing and eliminating disruptive problems in the school or in the classroom?" Based upon the information from this survey and our own experience as teachers and as administrators, five areas seemed to be of great concern to the participants. These areas are:

1. The principal should be a leader in staff development.
2. Teacher evaluation should be made a learning process.
3. The principal should make sure that fair rules and regulations are developed and enforced firmly by the administrative team.
4. The principal should make an effort to get to know the pupils.
5. Discipline should be applied with tolerance and in the absence of confrontation.

This is not to say that if an administrator were effective in each of the above areas that the school's discipline problems would cease. We *are* saying that many of the discipline problems would be eliminated if the principal made an honest effort to improve in the above areas.

## The Principal Should Be a Leader in Staff Development

Many problems will occur in the classroom and in the school because some of the teachers and administrators are not aware of the latest trends and techniques in teaching a particular subject or pupils from diverse backgrounds. The principal is responsible for anticipating the needs of the teachers so that the best inservice training can be provided for them. For principals to be aware of trends and techniques in education, they must keep abreast of educational activities themselves by reading journal articles, talking with other educators, and attending workshops and conferences. All principals should attend workshops in special areas such as techniques for teaching reading, mathematics, or social studies, or humanistic approaches to education, at least once every three years.

Principals should not assume that someone in the central office will make sure that relevant classes or workshops will be offered to the teachers yearly. Rather, they should poll the entire staff to find out the kind of assistance they need, observe the teachers' behavior in the classroom, observe the behavior of pupils, evaluate all of the collected information, and suggest proper classes and workshops for the administrative staff as well as for individual teachers.

In our work with teachers and administrators in more than 10 different states, we found that pupil behavior changes positively as a result of faculty

participation in workshops. The major factor in the change process of the pupils occurred because the attitudes of the teachers changed. From our point of view, the important factors were the teachers' trying different teaching techniques, learning to be more patient when working with pupils, and evaluating their own performances more effectively.

The principals must take the leadership in making sure that teachers and staff are encouraged to participate in classes or workshops that will strengthen teaching skills. This cannot be done by chance. It can only come from a trusting, systematic, knowledgeable principal, one who speaks from understanding and authority and serves as a model for the teaching staff. For example, Mrs. Brown has been teaching for nine years in two different schools in a midwestern school district. Presently, she is nearing the stage where she must update her teaching certification by completing six additional university credits. For the past two years she has been experiencing problems with individualizing instruction and working with students who are achieving at a lower rate than the others. For the summer, this teacher plans to attend a university and enroll in three hours of basket weaving and three hours of social science. Although these may be worthwhile courses, through counseling with the principal and by her own self-initiative, this teacher could enroll in classes that might assist her in individualizing her teaching and working more effectively with the low achiever.

### Teacher Evaluation Should be Made a Learning Process

Teachers find it difficult to cope with the day-to-day problems of the classroom and worry about the evaluations given by the principal or his/her designee. Teacher evaluation can be used as an administrative tool to prevent negative classroom behavior by providing additional inservice training for training the teacher.

Teachers were concerned about three major problems when we discussed the evaluation process with them. The first problem existed because some principals would appoint young inexperienced assistant principals to evaluate experienced teachers. Many teachers were uncomfortable because the evaluator wasn't knowledgeable concerning the techniques being used or the content being taught. Consequently many of them were uncomfortable with the entire process used for teacher evaluation. This uncertain feeling would frequently cause "good" teachers to worry about their own problems and neglect aspects of pupil planning, thereby causing possible discipline problems in the classroom.

The second problem existed because teachers felt that evaluation was subjective in nature and served as a device for principals to "fire," give "poor" recommendations or transfer teachers who would not acquiesce to the demands of the administration. These same teachers believed that evaluation should be a continuous process and should be used to improve the teacher effectiveness in the classroom. It was further stated that teachers would always fear evaluation unless: (a) the evaluators were knowledgeable in classroom techniques, (b) a meaningful conference would follow each classroom visit and, (c) criteria for evaluation were developed jointly by the teachers and the staff.

The third concern discussed by teachers was the fact that the pupils suffer when an educator seeks due process when a negative evaluation has been given. When a confrontation arises between the administrator and a teacher, the total efforts of both sides must be spent gathering data to support each claim. With the time spent in some form of open court with witnesses and the press present, people will surely spend much time looking for ways to support charges. Some witnesses, perhaps teachers, pupils, administrators or parents, may be called to testify on behalf of either side. Regardless of who wins the specific case, the pupils enrolled in the system are the eventual losers. The professional damage created will surely render either the principal or the teacher ineffective as a leader. From this decline in leadership effectiveness, the breeding ground for potential discipline problems will have been made fertile with seeds of distrust and disharmony.

The participants indicated that many teachers in the system should be fired. They are not properly instructing pupils, and are hurting the profession. They believe the principal should use every technique available to make evaluation a meaningful process and assist these teachers in making changes or leaving the profession. This procedure can take place when the school atmosphere has been developed into one of trust and respect. It is the principal's responsibility to work toward this kind of wholesome climate as long as he/she is the head of the school.

In the system where unions and other bargaining agencies have skillfully carved out contracts making it almost impossible to fire teachers, principals must work closer with these agencies to improve instruction. If a system of evaluation has as its ultimate aim better classroom climate and these concepts are followed by the administrators, the principal is doing his job toward eliminating potential discipline problems even though he/she is not in the classroom daily.

### The Principal Should Make Sure that Fair Rules and Regulations Are Developed and Enforced Firmly by the Administrative Team

An administrative team consists of all the personnel at the school who will make decisions concerning the pupils, teachers, or staff. For example, deans, counselors, assistant principals, department heads, registrars, and secretaries, fall into this category. It is a major responsibility of the principal to be sure that the rules and regulations are firmly, yet fairly, enforced by all. Thus, teachers felt that the action or lack of action of the administrative team was directly related to the behavior of the pupils in the classroom. Pupils who feel they are not treated fairly in the office will usually take out their frustration on the teacher or other pupils in the classroom.

The principal can take the following steps to be assured that the rules and regulations are fairly administered:

**The principal should be a good organizer.** The administrative team should be organized in such a manner that responsibilities are made clear to the members, teachers, and students. The organization should be based upon planning by the administration and faculty representatives and reviewed periodically for effectiveness. Good organization does not mean only that the principal has delegated authority for certain responsibilities and left all decision-making to the designee. Rather, a good organizer includes the appointment of quality people and the necessary follow-up to make certain that each one is striving to meet defined objectives of the school.

**The community should be given the opportunity to assist in the formation of some rules and regulations of the school.** Schools cannot be operated in a vacuum. Even when rules and regulations are firmly and fairly administered, problems can be created for the principal. For example, if a pupil is expelled or suspended from school and his parents are influential members of the community, political problems for the principal could result. However, rules and regulations must be fairly administered to all pupils.

In order to ensure active community support, the principal and the staff must make a concerted effort to work with people. In today's schools it is not enough to say that we have tried and only a very few will participate, or that we cannot get the people we really need to work with us.

Principals should actively elicit the support and advice of the local citizens when developing and enforcing rules and regulations. Listed below are two procedures we have found to be successful in getting the support of a major part of the community.

First, meetings should be held with selected groups of business people, housewives, athletes, average citizens, politicians, and civic organizations. These meetings could be organized as luncheons, chats, or by any description desired. The major objective would be for a teacher, administrator, or a well-wisher to sell the school to the people. Gatherings of this nature could be held once a month with a different group each time.

Second, PTO-PTA's should be organized. Organizations of this nature are currently on the decline. However, in the absence of other effective ways to reach small groups of parents, PTO's and PTA's could serve definite positive purposes. In order to remain viable, the objectives and purposes of these kinds of organizations will have to change. As stated by one of our participants, "The organization of the PTO must become less administration-dominated and become more community-dominated."

**School volunteers should be used.** Volunteers can serve as a positive source of community support if the program is organized and there is coordination and understanding of the roles to be played by teachers and volunteers. In one school the principal asked a mother to coordinate volunteer activities at the school. With assistance from a nearby university, volunteers were recruited, oriented and trained for specific use in that school. These volunteer workers were believed to be loyal supporters of the school and could be trusted to represent it during crucial times. The students greatly benefited from additional individual attention from the volunteers.

**Rules and regulations should be designed to be preventive rather than punitive.** There is a philosophical difference in deciding who should enforce the rules and who should administer the punishment. The major problem seems to be that some teachers are saying and demonstrating that they are employed to teach, and not to serve as police. The administrators are saying that the development of a positive learning climate is a partnership between the administration and the teachers and that teachers must be responsible for the enforcement of rules and regulations in their classrooms. This way they can increase the building of responsibility and self-direction in the students. When a dilemma of this nature occurs in a school, the principal should possess the kind of leadership skills that would be needed to bring each side together in order to compromise the differences.

Many of the rules and regulations given to pupils are needed in order for the school to function as

smoothly as possible. There are some rules and regulations for pupils that are difficult to enforce, are obsolete, and create opportunities for additional discipline problems. The participants in our research listed the following rules as examples of some that should be studied for possible revision.

*Rule I. Demerit.* For each minor infraction of a school rule the pupil will be given a demerit by the teacher. When the pupil has accrued five demerits, he must be sent to the principal's office for punishment.

A rule of this nature creates more problems for the teacher. For example, if there are 30 pupils in the class and each is given five infractions, then the teacher could conceivably have 150 disruptions (5 x 30) before punishment is administered. It appears that the rule is telling the pupil that it is okay to disrupt a class for five times, take your punishment and start all over again. In addition, the extra amount of book work needed to warn pupils of the number of demerits they have accumulated takes away from the time teachers would have to plan for classroom activities. Furthermore, this method for reducing disruptive problems is negative rather than positive because many teachers want pupils to know that any disruptive behavior is forbidden.

*Rule II. Chewing Gum.* Chewing gum is forbidden in the classroom. Any pupil who defies this rule must be brought to the office.

Many teachers and administrators want this rule enforced because some pupils will mar the furniture by sticking gum to it or drop gum on the carpet. The teachers indicated that this rule is almost impossible to enforce because some pupils will swallow the gum or dispose of it in another manner when confronted by the teacher. When the problem reaches the principal's office, it becomes the teacher's word against the pupil's word. Some pupils have claimed, when questioned by the principal, that they were chewing their tongues or chewing paper.

The teachers indicated that they were usually confronted with discipline problems much more severe than chewing gum. They felt that teachers could be more effective in developing a wholesome learning environment if they taught pupils how to chew gum and when to chew it. In addition, they asked, "What teacher would want a pupil suspended for three days for chewing gum?" Ignoring the gum chewing usually brings the situation under control.

*Rule III. Unexcused Absences.* Any pupil who is absent (unexcused) for more than eight days of a grading period shall automatically fail the class during that period.

A rule of this nature is designed to encourage pupils to attend classes as often as possible. Nevertheless, the teachers in the survey believed that this rule tends to cause more discipline problems for teachers, destroys individual pupil motivation, and tends to pit teachers against teachers during conferences with parents.

For example, a mother was invited to the school by the counselor in order for the teachers to share with her the reason why Sue, her daughter, would receive failing grades for the period. Sue had been absent more than 10 times from each of her classes. The dean was surprised and embarrassed when the teachers gave Sue an "A," two "B's" and an "F." Those who gave passing grades informed the others that Sue was a "very good" pupil and had been given "make up" work. The fourth teacher repeated the school's rule and stated firmly that the "F" would remain.

One can think that the counselor should have been sure of the grades before inviting the mother to the school. Nevertheless, a rule of this nature needs reviewing and revising. Teachers must have a general understanding and acceptance of the rule before it can be effectively enforced.

*Rule IV. Punishment.* When appropriate, paddling will be used as a form of punishment. Those pupils who don't wish to be paddled may be suspended from school for a maximum of five days.

In schools where paddling is legal, the guidelines should be clearly stated and discussed with all teachers. One should also ask, "Is there a positive relationship between the use of corporal punishment and 'good discipline'?" Many of the participants in this study felt that there was a positive relationship between paddling and "good discipline." However, they were careful to state that paddling should be used only as a last resort and should not be administered when the teacher is angry. Many of these same teachers and administrators were hesitant to answer when asked if they thought their own children should be paddled. Their answers ran all the way from . . ."if they really need it" . . . to "if I can supervise it." In light of this, schools should probably find less drastic means of punishment, ways in which the dignity of the pupils will not be lowered, and classroom climate will not be impaired.

There were other teachers who believed that paddling was the major method to punish some disruptive pupils. These teachers were not interested in

administering the licks themselves. They would rather send the disruptive pupil to the dean or the principal and to state the kind of punishment that should be administered. They were very critical of the front office if the pupil returned to the class unpaddled, or if there were not visible change in pupil behavior. Again, these teachers did not wish to administer the paddle themselves because as one participant said, "They have no one else to blame should the pupil's behavior remain the same or get worse after he is paddled."

A third group of teachers saw no need at all for paddling a pupil. They felt that paddling was a "cop-out" and it did nothing to change the behavior of the pupils. These teachers would rather turn the pupil over to the parents or find other forms of punishment for them.

Paddling should not be one of the chief methods teachers use for punishing a pupil. If paddling is to be used, it should be as the last resort by the principal or his designee. If paddling is needed to stop one pupil from hurting another or to encourage a delinquent pupil to remain in school, then it should be administered after giving the pupil a full explanation and a chance to refuse it. Paddling should never be used if the pupil refuses to accept it.

One who advocates the use of the paddle by all teachers should consider the potential for a liability suit. It is very easy for an adult to bruise, break or mark the skin of a young child or young adult. If a parent wishes to, a negligence or assault and battery suit could be filed against the paddler and other school officials. This factor alone should be enough to discourage paddling and to encourage teachers to find alternative means for punishing pupils.

There are many school-wide rules and policies that are needed and enforceable. These rules are needed in order to provide the best learning climate for pupils. They should be reviewed periodically and updated when it is appropriate to do so. Other rules, similar to the ones listed, should be eliminated or revised if they create problems for the staff and pupils. Principals and teachers need to remember that it is difficult to organize and operate today's schools with rules that were developed five or 10 years ago. Rules and policies should be developed only in order to assist teachers in the elimination or prevention of classroom discipline problems.

### The Principal Should Make an Effort to Get to Know the Pupils

In schools where there are more than 1,000 pupils enrolled, it is difficult for the principal to recognize all of them. Nevertheless, in an effort to prevent disruptive classroom and school problems, teachers and other administrators felt it was important for the principal to know the pupils. Our sources indicated that many of the decisions made concerning the welfare of pupils depended upon how well the pupils were known to members of the administrative team.

It is true that principals are very busy and are often working 12 to 18 hour days, and many of these hours are spent in some manner with discipline problems. However, some of these hours could be devoted to program planning if a portion of them were spent getting to know as many pupils as possible.

Getting to know pupils doesn't mean that they will be called into the office and told "this and that" by the principal. Getting to know them requires a special kind of skill from a special kind of administrator. This administrator knows the kind of questions to ask each person, is capable of listening to pupils, is tolerant, recognizes potentially explosive situations, and can conclude the meeting or the chat with everyone feeling good.

An administrator who is making an effort to know all the pupils in the school will develop several techniques for accomplishing this purpose. Some administrators will learn more about pupils in groups such as athletics, band, chorus, or other clubs and activities. The principal might visit and converse with the pupils in the classroom or before and after a performance given by them. Other administrators might visit certain academic classes and substitute for the teacher for a half hour or so. This "substitute teacher" would use this time to listen to pupils on a variety of issues, or teach the subject that is scheduled. Another principal might invite small groups of pupils to the office for an informal chat. These pupils, coming from diverse backgrounds, should be told the purpose of the conference and placed at ease during the entire meeting. Still other principals might invite groups of pupils to eat lunch with them. Usually this kind of affair is held in the lunch room in plain view of the other teachers and pupils.

Listening to pupils is a process in which the principal is saying, "I recognize your problems, I am fully aware of them; however, it is not possible to meet every need or wish that you have. I will listen to all concerns and do my best, within local, state, and federal policies to meet your needs." The principal further indicates to pupils that they should feel free to consult him on any issue or problem they might have.

Pupils do not expect anyone to solve all of the

problems they may have. They want the right to sit down with school officials and to express their views. In this process, some of their grievances will be taken under serious consideration. If pupils are given alternatives for the problems they have, and if they have input into the decision-making process, many classroom discipline problems will be eliminated. School administrators should not effect changes with every demand of every pupil, but the curriculum should be broad enough for all persons involved to find satisfactory alternatives. If the pupil chooses to leave school at a legal age, then that is his decision (hopefully, after complete counseling by an effective counselor). But we must listen to pupils and strive to meet their needs.

Listening to pupils also might be a device for helping students develop the respect and responsibility needed to listen to adults. The principal and the staff still have the responsibility for operating an effective school. They cannot change the basic philosophy and objectives of the school daily. They must use their professional judgments in determining how far the listening process must extend.

### Discipline Should Be Applied with Tolerance and In the Absence of Confrontation

#### Tolerance

Effective principals are tolerant, understanding, and have a keen sense of timing. It is more efficient for a school leader to set examples of the kind of behavior he expects pupils to display than to issue "edicts." Pupils will defy school rules and regulations they disagree with. Some of the infractions will be clear violations of policy and the penalty will have been decided far in advance of the infraction. For example, a school board's policy states that pupils will be expelled from school for bringing guns or other firearms to school. The principal's only decision in this case would be to enforce the policy.

In the case where the infraction of rules is not as clear cut, the principal must make a decision. For example, two pupils are sent to the office for fighting. There were no eyewitnesses to the fight; therefore, the principal must make a decision based on the information he has at hand. His knowledge of the pupils' attitudes, ability to listen, and his tolerance and understanding of the situation are all factors that will influence the decision.

Tolerance is a process by which the administrator can remain unemotional when a pupil becomes belligerent or bellicose when discussing his side of an altercation. His decision will still be based upon the facts of the case and the punishment will be in keeping with similar cases of this nature. Naturally, a decision will not be reached until all facts of the case have been thoroughly discussed by each side.

Tolerance means that the administrator will eliminate as many biases as possible before listening to the case. For example, Billy, a trouble maker, is brought to the office for constantly pestering Sue, a pupil who hasn't caused any problems for the three years she has been in the school. It is hoped that the administrator would be sincere in listening to the case and not make a decision until all the pertinent facts are known.

A lack of tolerance and understanding by the principal of the school concerning the behavior of pupils can create discipline problems for teachers as well as the administrator. Even though it might require more time to fully explore every case that requires a decision, in the long run it would be to the principal's advantage to use a little more time rather than not enough.

#### Avoiding Confrontation

Many experienced principals will avoid placing pupils in a position of serious confrontation. Many of these administrators can perceive a potentially explosive situation and defuse the issue early in a conference. When pupils are placed in a position where they might fight to surface, or their backs are placed against the wall, a serious confrontation is usually the answer. The end results are that the pupils are suspended or expelled from school for insubordination. This action may be taken before the original charge can be fully explored.

There are many procedures which principals can take in order to avoid a serious confrontation with pupils. The procedures suggested below will assist the decision-maker in ruling on the charge rather than on issues created during a conference:

**The administrator must perceive the seriousness of the problem.** When confronted with a situation, the decision-maker will study the seriousness of the problem before meeting with the pupils. If there is a lack of time for studying the problem, then the administrator should study the reactions of the parties as the conference progresses. It might be wise to apply some of the following techniques in order to allow the pupils to "cool off." The decision-maker could talk first in order to ease the tension. This talk would be general in nature and not name either party as innocent or guilty. Guidelines for discussion could be established so that each pupil would have equal time for presentation and rebuttal. A third procedure could be to have each party take a few minutes to write down a description of what happened and allow time for

these descriptions to be read by the decision-maker before oral discussion began.

The major purpose of the examples listed above is to allow the pupil a few minutes to "cool off." The potential for an explosive situation is evident, but the chance for unneeded verbal abuse by either pupil has been lessened. At the proper moment, the principal can move toward a solution of the problem that exists. The decision can now be made in a calmer atmosphere with reasonable people participating in the decision. The loser of the case will not like the decision made; nevertheless, the decision will likely be accepted because it is based upon facts rather than upon emotions.

**The administrator should be skillful in asking questions.** When probing to find answers to questions an administrator should be skillful in the process of asking questions. Questions should be used to get after facts rather than to try to trick pupils into confessing to something.

The principal should establish a "good" conference climate for the parties involved. One way to open the conference is to ask, "How should we go about this discussion today?" Pupils generally will offer much information to the process and to the facts of the case, if the correct questions are asked.

After one person has spoken, uninterrupted, the principal might ask the other person, "Is that story correct?" "What are the differences?" After each discussion the principal will note the differences in the discussions and concentrate on solving these. If witnesses are needed, they can assist in the establishment of truth on a few points rather than going over each incident.

At the end of the conference the last question could be, "Were you treated fairly in this office concerning this case?" Many of the pupils will leave the office feeling good about the process, even though they disagree with the decision. These same pupils, when returning to the classrooms will tend not to be as great a disruptive force because of the fair treatment received in the office.

Many pupils become disruptive because they were treated unfairly in the office or by some teacher or administrator. The principal can do much to save some of these pupils from suspensions, expulsions or other serious punishments if they perceive the seriousness of the situation and cope with it.

**The administrator should demonstrate moderate voice control and neutral non-verbal behavior.** Some pupils will enter the office believing that they are going to get the worst of the decision. Therefore, they are usually loud and out of control when they enter the office. The principal could make a serious mistake if he yells or talks in a heavy tone similar to that of the pupil. It is much better for the principal to invite the pupil to sit in the office or another designated place and talk with him in a low calm voice. Usually, pupils will talk loud for a few sentences and then begin to lower their voices. Once the principal notes the change in their behavior, then he should begin to sort out the facts of the case. Example: Melvin Brown was sent to the dean's office because Susan told the teacher Melvin called him a "dirty S.O.B." As Melvin approached the office, one could hear him say, "I have been suspended once from school; therefore, I know they are going to believe Susan for lying about me." As Melvin, Susan, and a third pupil approached the office, they were met by the dean who asked, "What's all this noise for?" Tommy, the third pupil, gave the dean a note from the teacher which read, "Melvin called me a dirty S.O.B. Susan heard him. I don't want him in my class again unless you do something about him. He is very disruptive." As the dean read the note, Melvin was still talking, raving and indicating that he would be punished for something he didn't say.

The dean, skillful in his work, said in a calm voice, "OK, Melvin, settle down." He invited them to sit around a table in his office in order to discuss the problem. After Melvin became rational, the dean was successful in finding through skillful probing that Melvin had not called the teacher an S.O.B. He had said something to the effect that the teacher reminded him of another dirty S.O.B. he had for a teacher last year.

With the new information, the dean had two problems to confront him. He had to deal with Susan for not telling the full truth and Melvin for using language that was not permitted in the school. In a cool, unemotional voice, the dean thanked Tommy for bringing the note and accompanying Melvin and Susan to the office. He told him to return to class and that he would come to the class with the other two.

Immediately Susan began to cry, saying that she hadn't intended to get Melvin in trouble and that she apologized for starting all the trouble. Melvin kept on repeating that he couldn't be sent home again because his father would not like it. He further stated that he told Susan this in confidence and that she had told him similar things about teachers. They told the dean that they were willing to take their punishment and that this would never happen to them again.

The dean made a potentially explosive problem relatively simple because he asked the right ques-

tions, demonstrated good voice control and showed no favoritism toward either pupil. The important factor was that he had lessened the disruptive problems for the teacher because he had taken time to listen and to get the facts. He also suggested to the teacher that he should be careful in stating what someone said unless he heard it himself.

Melvin will not cease all of the disruptive behavior that he has demonstrated in the past. However, he has given his promise to do better, he is better known by the dean, and his father wants him to remain in school. Therefore, he can be reasoned with if it is necessary to do so.

**The administrator should have several alternatives for pupils (where possible) when an infraction of the rules occurs.** In the case above the decision-maker had much discretion in developing the kind of punishment to be administered. The pupil's past history as a disruptive factor and the attitude displayed during the conference may determine the punishment in a few cases. However, if the goal of the school is to provide the best education possible for all pupils, alternatives seem to be in order.

Janet is sent to the office for stealing money from a classmate's purse. She has admitted to the theft and is slightly upset because she committed this act. Other than a few tears, her disposition is very well under control. She admitted to the dean that this was her first time doing this and that she wouldn't do it again.

The school board's policy in this kind of act is loosely defined. The decision-maker can administer punishment from a "slap in the wrist," to a suspension for 10 days. In this case there was no overt threat of a confrontation, and the major problem seems to be a need for expert counseling so as to try to prevent this problem from reoccurring. After talking with Janet for a short time, the following alternatives were presented to her:

- "You must return the money and apologize to Helen for taking it. This must be done in the dean's office."
- "You must talk with the counselor at least three times about the problem."
- "You can be suspended for five days."
- "You can bring your parents out to the school and we will discuss the problem again."

Janet accepted the first two alternatives. Six months after the incident she hadn't returned to the office and she was progressing well in her classes. For all practical purposes the incident was forgotten and Janet was a member in good standing with her group. The counselor reported that they met several times and that she was pleased with the progress Janet had shown.

Nancy was sent to the office for "shaking down a girl in the bathroom." This was Nancy's second visit to the office for the same infraction. When entering the principal's office, she became very defensive and was expressing herself quite violently. Even though she cooled down verbally and nonverbally, she refused to answer any questions presented to her by the principal. The principal wanted to avoid a confrontation developing with this pupil.

The school's policy states that the principal must deal "directly and severely with pupils who commit acts of this nature." After the first act Nancy was suspended for three days and she returned the money. During the conference for the first act she admitted the "shakedown." This time, she said that she didn't do it. This denial called for a full investigation of the problem. Again, Nancy wouldn't talk about the problem, other than to say she didn't do it.

The principal felt that the conference was of no further value because Nancy wouldn't cooperate in the discussion. In order to avoid a bad situation Nancy was given the following alternatives:

- "You may go home for the remainder of the day and collect your thoughts. Tomorrow you can return with your parents and we will discuss the problem."
- "Use the wash room in the principal's office and clean your face, get yourself together and come back and talk with me."
- "Discuss the problem with the dean or the counselor this morning then come back to me."

Nancy chose to go home and to return with her parents the next day. The important part of this case was that the pupil was given alternatives so as to avoid a serious problem. The alternatives were fair yet firm enough to give Nancy time to cool off enough to discuss the problem.

The next day Nancy returned with her parents and admitted that she had "shaken the girl down." When the principal was satisfied that she was telling the truth she was suspended for 10 days. She was warned that the next infraction of this nature would cause her to be expelled from school for the remainder of the year plus a possible lawsuit from the parents of those she victimized.

The principal's action was firm and fair. The decision wasn't made until all of the facts of the case had been known. The pupil was given the maximum penalty for the infraction. A series of sessions with the guidance counselor was set up for her upon returning to the school. These sessions were intended to make her return to school as smooth as possible. Her parents have also agreed to help her by spending more time with her.

**The principal should attempt to conclude all meetings with a positive tone.** It is much easier to say or suggest this procedure than to succeed in implementing it. But it is crucial for this process to take place so that there is a chance for a wholesome relationship to develop between principal and pupil.

Many of the participants in our survey stated that principals should develop techniques that assist the pupil to accept punishment without resentment. Nevertheless, they quickly pointed out that effective principals are successful in this area. They are successful because they create the climate for a successful conference before getting to the problem. Of course, there are some pupils and some situations where it would not be in the best interest of the school for the principal to attempt to end the meeting on a positive tone. Each situation is unique and the principal will have to determine when and how to end a particular meeting.

Decision-making is a major factor in the development of a positive school climate. The principal must be fair, honest, and person-oriented. He must spend much time seeking techniques for the development of a positive school climate.

William is sent to the office for disrupting his science class. His disruptions are not severe enough for the principal to suspend or expel him. They consist of tardiness in coming to class, eating, falling asleep, not doing his work, and distracting others. William has an excuse for all of his actions. He constantly repeats that the teacher doesn't like him and that is why he sends him to the office (two times in three days).

The principal spent time discussing the problem with William. The pupil admitted that he had disrupted the class in the manner the teacher described. He didn't feel that his behavior was any different than that of some of the other pupils. He asked to be removed from the teacher's class since it was the only class where he had problems.

William was asked to state the kind of punishment he should receive for his behavior. He asked to be moved to another science class and if his behavior didn't change he should be sent home for a few days. He further indicated that it wasn't entirely his fault that he got into trouble in that class. He would not talk because the teacher would embarrass him when he said something and everyone would laugh at him.

After a complete discussion of the problem the principal made the following decision:

- The two of them would discuss the problem in a conference with the present teacher and another science teacher.
- If both teachers agreed, he would be moved to another class.
- Should his behavior become negative in the new class he would return to the office and his punishment would be harsh.

The decision was based upon the fact that there could have been personality problems between the teacher and the pupil. The principal was making an effort to help William find himself and at the same time assist the teacher in avoiding disruptive problems.

The decision made by the principal was acceptable to the pupil and the two teachers. They chatted about the problem and made plans for William to attend his new class the next day. The new teacher was very candid with the pupil. She discussed the kind of classroom she had and the behavior she expected from him. He agreed to abide by class rules and to become a good person in the class. Three weeks after the change was made the new teacher reported that though William had disrupted the class a few times, his behavior was nearly on the level of the others.

## Conclusion

The role of the principal in the prevention of disruptive classroom behavior is very important. The suggested procedures listed are intended to cause principals to think about their own schools and to develop procedures for helping teachers overcome their weaknesses. The development of rules and regulations for a school and the process for enforcing them are, perhaps, the most important factors in preventing or causing disruptive problems in the school.

An individual classroom is only one component of the total learning environment; thus the principal must constantly seek ways to improve the entire atmosphere of the school. Teacher evaluation, delegating responsibility, getting to know pupils, and effective organization are additional areas that

could have favorable or adverse effect on the development of a wholesome school climate. Principals should remember that they will be praised if the school has a minimum of discipline problems and they will be damned if there is a maximum number of discipline problems.

# NEWS NOTES

*FOR SALE*

*One complete, bound set of the Curriculum Bulletins, 31 volumes bound into 23 board-covered books, 337 bulletins, plus revised editions, containing nearly 9500 pages. Bulletins 1-309, 317, 323, and 325 are out of print; current value of individual bulletins, $1425.00; of bindings, $217.00. Sale price, $350.00.*

*If interested, write,*
*Editor, Curriculum Bulletin, Oceanside, OR 97134*

*Also, books, magazines, and monographs on Education in Nepal. If interested, send for free price list.*
*Address: American-Nepal Education Foundation*
*Oceanside, OR 97134*

*Special close-out sale on Curriculum Bulletins published before 1978. See inside front cover.*